

funding for Charter Schools and supported the Charter School Facilities Financing Demonstration Program during consideration of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that charter schools give parents options when determining the best public school in which to enroll their children. Thus, we must ensure that all our students reach their highest academic potential, which may require attending a charter school that provides a model better suited towards an individual student's needs.

#### H.R. 1350, IMPROVING EDUCATION RESULTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

**HON. JAMES T. WALSH**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 30, 2003*

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 1350, Improving Education Results for Children with Disabilities Act of 2003.

More than two decades ago, the federal government imposed special education mandates on states and local school districts. Ever since then, the federal government has struggled to fund those mandates.

Our nation's special needs children require a special commitment. And I'm pleased that this Congress has met that commitment with this IDEA renewal and reauthorization bill.

It is important to note that since 1996 when Republicans regained the majority of this body, overall federal IDEA funding to states and school districts has increased by 282.3%. From 1996 to 2003, IDEA spending has increased an average of 18.6% per year—that's more than double the average annual increases from 1988 to 1995 when Democrats held the majority.

This bill reauthorizes that renewed commitment that our party has brought to our nation's education policy. Not only is it Congress' responsibility to financially support the provision of special education by local school districts, it is our duty to ensure that no child is left behind in America's classrooms. Today, with this legislation we reaffirm this important priority.

In addition to renewing our continued commitment to special needs education funding, H.R. 1350 increases accountability and improves education results for children with disabilities by deemphasizing compliance with complicated rules, diverting that attention to delivering academic results. It ensures that parents of special needs children will receive report cards from schools showing academic progress indicators beginning in 2005, just as the No Child Left Behind reforms implemented such policies for mainstream students.

H.R. 1350 reduces the Individualized Education Plan, or IEP, paperwork burden on districts and special education teachers, lengthening the required IEP filing from every one to three years, though these provisions in the bill are options for BOTH states and parents. If parents opt for an annual IEP, this package continues to guarantee that right. By amending lengthy paperwork requirements, we ensure that teachers will spend more of their time on instructing students and less on filing government forms.

In addition, H.R. 1350 improves early intervention strategies to reduce overidentifying or even misidentifying students as those with special needs. This legislation will give flexibility to local districts to use a percentage of funds for pre-referral services.

Finally, this legislation supports general education and special education teachers by providing for appropriate professional development and encouraging innovative approaches to parental involvement and parental choice.

Mr. Chairman, local school districts throughout my congressional district in New York State face uncertain fiscal times this coming budget year and, quite possibly, well into the near future. Funding instructional services for students with special needs is an enormous burden these districts bear. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 1350 to more fully share in this responsibility.

#### REGULATORY CERTAINTY

**HON. MARY BONO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 1, 2003*

Mrs. BONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on an issue of critical importance to our economy.

Throughout the broadband debate over the past two years, we have all heard from carriers of all shapes and sizes. They have very different business plans and different opinions on the way competition should proceed. The one common message from all of these disparate companies, however, is a strong and urgent call for regulatory certainty. Individual investors, Wall Street analysts and companies alike all demand it.

I fear that the recent FCC action on the Triennial Review threatens to exponentially increase regulatory uncertainty for the telecommunications sector. I fear lawsuits all across the country that will drag out resolution of these important issues for many years to come. Our world of digital packets of information traveling at the speed of light knows no geographic boundaries. However the resulting state-by-state patchwork of burdensome regulations threatens to pose yet another obstacle to getting reasonably priced broadband to our constituents.

The old adage is true, you can't make everyone happy, all of the time. But if we level the playing field and let the markets work, the smart people in these companies can at least develop business plans and investors can judge their strategy on the merits. These companies need some clear direction so they can plan their futures, adjust, adapt and deliver for their shareholders and consumers.

Just ten short years ago we watched as the telecommunications sector drove the greatest economic expansion in the history of the world. The American people that are suffering through this depressed economy demand leadership. We must provide certainty and stability to the telecommunications sector so that our markets can work and drive our economy to greatness once again.

IN HONOR OF THE U.S. CHAMPION MOORPARK HIGH SCHOOL DECATHLON TEAM

**HON. ELTON GALLEGLY**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 1, 2003*

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Moorpark High School Academic Decathlon Team as the United States Academic Decathlon Champions.

This is the second time in five years that Moorpark High School's team has won this premiere scholastic contest. Prior to its win in 1999, no team from Ventura County, California, had even competed in the nationals.

Team members Lindsay Hebert, Nathaniel Jones, Adam Abed, Paul Ideal, Kevin Randolph, Ashlee Scott, Grant Volk, Tracy Yagi and Max Geiger are now recognized as the best and the brightest in the country. They are the pride of their school, their community and their country.

These youngsters won by literally dedicating their lives to the challenge. For nine months they put in up to 40 hours a week beyond their school days to study and hone their skills. They gave up weekends, vacations, part-time jobs and time with their families.

Their hard work paid off. Last weekend, Moorpark scored 51,423 points out of a possible 60,000 points to win the national title against 37 other teams from throughout the country. They brought home 15 gold, nine silver and seven bronze medals.

Their coach, Larry Jones, worked as hard, if not harder, than his students and is as deserving of high praise. Coach Jones has said he will retire from the team after 12 years of leading dozens of students to victory at the county, state and national level. He said the same thing after winning the 1999 championship, but this time he says he means it. At a minimum, he has earned some relaxation in the glow of a job well done—again. I know my colleagues will join me in wishing him the best in whatever his future brings.

Mr. Speaker, I also know my colleagues will join me in applauding nine outstanding students who achieved a very prestigious goal—Lindsay Hebert, Nathaniel Jones, Adam Abed, Paul Ideal, Kevin Randolph, Ashlee Scott, Grant Volk, Tracy Yagi and Max Geiger—the U.S. champion Moorpark High School Academic Decathlon Team.

#### VOTER PROTECTION ACT

**HON. RON PAUL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 1, 2003*

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Voter Protection Act. Unlike most so-called "campaign reform" proposals, the Voter Protection Act enhances fundamental liberties and expands the exchange of political ideas. The Voter Fairness Act accomplishes this goal by lowering and standardizing the requirements for, and the time required to get, signatures to qualify a Federal candidate for the ballot. Many states have unfair rules and regulations that make it virtually impossible for minor party and independent candidates to get on the ballot.